



*Accept the **Challenge***  
*Experience the **Reward***

Consider a Career  
in Chemical Dependency Counseling

# Why consider a career in chemical dependency counseling?

THERE IS GREAT SATISFACTION in making a positive difference in another person's life. As a Chemical Dependency Professional (CDP), you will have that opportunity every day.

Becoming a CDP can be the beginning of a career in social services, a second career, or a way to expand the education and experience you already have in order to help people with chemical dependency.

As a CDP, you will use your skills and knowledge to meet the many needs of people seeking recovery, and their families. You will address complex physical, emotional, mental and social problems that result from chemical dependency.

Chemical dependency treatment is a multidisciplinary field that includes social workers, doctors, psychologists, health educators, counselors and nurses, all working together to help people regain their health and productivity. Many enter the profession after seeing first-hand how counselors guide people through the life-changing journey of treatment and recovery.



My counselor made a difference in my life through her inspiration, motivation and by just being there. I can now make a difference in my children's lives by staying healthy and being there for them.

*A Parent of  
Four Children*

## What are the latest advances in the field?

THE TREATMENT OF ADDICTIVE DISORDERS continues to evolve, incorporating science and medical research, cutting-edge behavioral therapies and research-based treatment programs that focus on building skills and influencing healthy attitudes and lifestyles.

CDPs have access to a comprehensive “toolbox” of evidence-based clinical

techniques, educational resources on a multitude of health issues, human relations skills and support from a multidisciplinary team of co-workers.

“

The addiction field is central to the helping professions.

”

*A Clinical Treatment Supervisor*

3

## What are CDP's saying about their career?

“I WAS INTRODUCED TO THE ADDICTIONS FIELD while in college and doing an internship in an adolescent treatment program. Teens present challenges for the counselor, and when they make positive changes in their lives it gives you a good feeling to know that you were part of that. You know that you are making a difference.”

*Adolescent Treatment Coordinator licensed as both a Chemical Dependency Professional and a Social Worker.*

"DAILY I WORK WITH ADOLESCENTS who have serious addiction and mental health problems. I also supervise the counselors who work with them. The teens are often viewed as having low potential, but through providing life-changing treatment and developing productive goals, the results are clear. We don't cure our patients - we guide them on their chosen paths."

*Program Director with a Masters in Psychology, and licensed as a counselor and chemical dependency professional.*



4

"THE CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY TREATMENT FIELD IS CHARACTERIZED BY INCREDIBLE CAMARADERIE among the staff and patients. Not many occupations provide the kind of support and encouragement that makes it an enjoyable place to work."

*Psychiatrist in a residential treatment program for adults.*

"EARLY IN MY CAREER AS A CORRECTIONS OFFICER, I was surprised by the number of prisoners who were chemically addicted. I became interested in the addictions field, earned an Associate's Degree in Chemical Dependency, a CDP certification, and a Bachelor's Degree. I have been promoted to a number of positions with increasing responsibility, and have helped many people make positive changes and stay out of prison.

*Lead Counselor, Correctional Drug Treatment Unit*

# I'm interested in a career as a CDP. What are the next steps?

The following questions and answers can help you decide if a career as a CDP is right for you.

## **What are the career options in the chemical dependency profession?**

There are two classifications for providing chemical dependency treatment:

- A Chemical Dependency Professional (CDP) has completed the required education, experience and testing to be certified by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH).
- A Chemical Dependency Professional Trainee (CDPT) is a registered counselor, but does not yet meet the training and experience requirements for a CDP. A CDPT provides chemical dependency services under the direction of an approved supervisor.



## **What is the current need for CDPs?**

There has never been a better time to become a CDP, because there is a critical shortage of CDPs in Washington State. A 2006 survey sponsored by the Washington State Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse revealed the following:

- 40% of treatment directors reported that their agencies are understaffed.
- 24% reported that they would still be understaffed if all budgeted positions were filled, due to the increased demand for CDP services.
- The field is “aging out” – 37% of clinicians are in their 50’s, and a significant number will soon be retiring.

## **What are the employment and financial opportunities for CDPs?**

There are jobs in many areas of public and private social and health services:

- Residential and outpatient treatment agencies
- Schools
- State and county probation and corrections departments
- Mental health agencies
- Drug prevention / intervention programs
- State and county social and health services programs

Salaries and benefits vary based on the agency, experience, and education, however, salaries are increasing and health benefits are included in 80% of treatment agencies.

## How do I become a CDP or CDPT?

To get detailed information about education, experience, and licensing requirements, log on to [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov), click on Topics A-Z, and select Chemical Dependency Professionals, or call (360) 236-4700.

## To learn more about working in the addictions field:

- Chemical Dependency Professionals of Washington State (CDPWS)  
Dave Harris, President  
(253) 740-4067  
E-mail: [soundcounselinginc@hotmail.com](mailto:soundcounselinginc@hotmail.com)
- CDP Jobline: [www.cdpcertification.org](http://www.cdpcertification.org)



*Robert, a CDP*

“

The treatment I received worked. I am celebrating 14 years of recovery and for the last 12 years I have worked as a CDP. My life has meaning and purpose, and I am a healthy and responsible person today, committed to my recovery and helping others.

”

*Accept the **Challenge**  
Experience the **Reward***



Washington State  
Department of Social  
& Health Services

**DASA** Division of Alcohol  
& Substance Abuse

[www1.dshs.wa.gov/dasa](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/dasa)

**For information about state-funded  
treatment, referrals, and crisis counseling:**

Alcohol and Drug 24-Hour Help Line

Toll Free: 1-800-562-1240

In Seattle: (206) 722-3700

Teenline: 1-877-345-TEEN